

Serial No.: 09/924,620

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REMARKS

Upon entry of the instant Amendment, Claims 1-10, 12, 14, and 16-20 are pending. Applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 1-10 and 19-20 were indicated to be allowable, and that claims 12, 14, and 16-18 were indicated to be allowable if amended into independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims; the claims have been so amended. Additionally, claims 1 and 17 have been amended to provide minor corrections. Claims 11, 13, and 15 have been canceled.

Claims 12, 14, and 16-18 were objected to as being dependent on rejected base claims, but indicated to be allowable if amended into independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 12, 14, 16, and 17 have been so amended; claim 18 depends from amended claim 16. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that basis for the objection is obviated.

Claims 11, 13, and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirata, U.S. Patent No. 5,327,391 ("Hirata"). Claims 11, 13, and 15 have been canceled. Thus, their rejection is moot.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is earnestly solicited.

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